



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

JANUARY - 2003

Dear Friends,

Wish you all a very happy, prosperous and 'service filled' New Year.

We look back and see what we have done in 2002 at Sevalaya. We added a new service wing 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa old age home' for the destitute old people. Today nearly 25 such senior citizens stay there and receive our services free of any charges. We added more cows in our Vinobaji Ghosala with the help of friends from AID, Pittsburgh. With this we became self sufficient with respect to milk requirements. We also produced rice for three months consumption this year. As usual, we have tried to reduce our burden on buying vegetables by growing vegetables in house. The school did very well and the results were of very high standards. We conducted a school exhibition where children had exhibits on all subjects. The education department officials who visited the exhibition commented that our school is no less in quality than any other such school in the city. In fact they advised us to apply for upgrading our school to higher secondary level. The school construction for this wing is under progress now. The necessary application forms have been filed with the authorities. We had many training programs for the staff. The 'Leadership training' for the people who have taken up leading roles in our various wings, was a new training added this year. Dr. Suseela Sambamurthy, visited the campus medical centre regularly throughout the year and treated our children. Ms. Malavika from Dr.M.S.Swaminathan institute also conducted regular blood test and IQ test for the children.

The 'vitamin added' salt which was supplied by her throughout the year, acted as a preventive medicine. Her studies proved that our children get almost the same level of nutritious food as any middle class family child in the city. The number of books in the library has gone up and the usage has also gone up. Thanks to TCS, we have 30 PCs now and the computer centre is ready to serve as lab for the higher secondary level. We have also had stable staff members in all departments, except Goshala. In fact, the full time volunteers in the campus are slowly increasing in number. We are very happy that the institution is able to attract people with service interest to come and serve free of any charges. Of course, this includes volunteers from abroad also, who came and stayed at the campus from USA, UK & Germany.

Yes, the year 2002 was a very successful year for Sevalaya. We have to ensure now that 2003 will be much better than 2002! Like last year, we will come to all of you requesting for suggestions on how we can improve. We need your inputs to come out with a detailed annual plan for the period April 2003 - March 2004. We will be sending you forms or questionnaires to fill up, very soon. You can also start sending your inputs by e-mails, letters, or even phone calls!

We need the support of all of you to make 2003 a prosperous year for destitute, poor and orphan children, senior citizens and cows.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

T.C.S .-Support to us in our aim of self-reliance:

In the last issue, we had reported that two of our volunteers would be traveling to TCS, Pune, to understand the Know-how of low-cost 'Gandhian Water filter' developed by TCS, Pune. Our volunteers Mr.Kumar and Mr.Selvam underwent the training for four days. They have reported gratefully about the hospitality and support rendered by TCS Pune staff and management.

They received thorough training for four days. The trainers emphasized that it was an out-and-out low cost technology meant to benefit poorer sections of society.

Armed with the know-how transferred to us free of cost, we hope we will be able to help the poorer sections to secure hygienic drinking water at a low cost.

Book Review Meetings:

Date	..	7.12.2002
Speaker	..	S.Saravanan
Book	..	Hind Swaraj
Author	..	M.K Gandhi
Date	..	14.12.2002
Speaker	..	M.Durairaj
Book	..	Science of Living
Author	..	Acharya Mahapragya
Date	..	21.12.2002
Speaker	..	P.S.Manimegalai
Book	..	Ways to solve problems
Author	..	Gnanamoorthy

Training and Development-Leadership Training:

It was an intensive brain storming session for the whole day for our leaders and would-be leaders on the 6th of December. The programme was down-to-earth taking into account "shop-floor" realities. The facilitators were wholly internal, excepting Mr. Lakshmi Murali who has become almost a part of our organization. The topics covered were: Leadership, Motivation, decision-making, assertiveness, Problem solving, communication, delegation, customer relations, Management By Objective, Economy, discipline, and self-improvement. There were interesting exercises and group discussions.

A follow up meeting of the training is scheduled on 5th January 2003.

Continuous Learning:

Mr.R.Narayanan, Vice-President, and Training in-charge, Thiruvananthapuram Centre of Tata Consultancy Services, talked to our staff members on the needs for and benefits of continuous learning.

Sevalaya goes on AIR!

Those who can do not fail to listen to:

F.M.1.Station of All India Radio

At 4.05 P.M. on 4.1.2003 when our children will be performing the programme,

"Arumbugal Arangam" (Kids Gallery)

Health Care:

A whole day medical camp was conducted at our Campus on 22.12.2002 when our inmates and villagers had the benefit of Check-up and advice of a team of specialists including a Gynecologist.

L.I.C. shows the way !

" Yogakshemam Vahamyaham" (Your Welfare is our responsibility) assures the members of Life Insurance Corporation of India, Annanager division, Chennai to our children and senior citizens on 15.12.2002. Sports and Recreation Club of the Division celebrated their Annual Day in a unique and meaningful way by a visit with families to our Centre and organizing a Magic Show for their benefit.

Mr. T.Siddharthan , Sr.Divisional Manager, and Mr.Gnanaselvan, Secretary of the Club spoke appreciating the services of Sevalaya and assuring their continued support. They presented to a sizeable quantity of notebooks, Pencils, Boxes, bags soapboxes, towels etc.

Kingdom of God is, here, and now, on Earth!

Beautifully decorated Christmas tree, and entertainment and gifts by Santa Claus were the highlights of the Christmas Day celebrations at our Campus on 24th December.

Mr.D.S.Madhuranayagam, Retd.Head Master of Dasser High School, Tirunindravur, addressing on the occasion said, " Kingdom of God is here, now, in the earth in the loving

Hearts." He further added that Peace and Good Will ultimately prevail in this world despite the present turbulence and turmoil because it is the will of God. Quoting Bharathiyar and Parables, he extorted the children not only to love their friends, but enemies too.

Living in tune with Nature ...!

This was the theme of the two day free training camp on Yoga, Nature Cure, and Natural diet, conducted at our campus on 28.12.2002 and 29.12.2002. Er.A.Meyyappan B.E.M.B.A., retired Additional Chief Engineer, Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, co-ordinated the programme, and Yogarathna Dr.T.A.Krishnan provided the faculty support.

Er. Meyyappan belongs to the tribe of good souls who voluntarily approach us offer their unqualified support. He conducted Yoga classes for our children everyday morning and evening during the Christmas Vacation.

Ramzan, Religious Harmony, and Bharathi day:

On 15.12.2002 there was a function in connection with the above occasions at our campus.

" Respect for others and love towards all are the essential qualities to build a harmonious society, " observed Mr.K.V.S.Habeeb Mohamed, Joint Secretary, Islamic Foundation Trust, speaking on the occasion.

Speaking at the same function Kavimamani Ilayavan, profusely quoting Poet Bharathi stressed the importance of religious tolerance and love for all for a peaceful and strong society. Members of Ilakkiya Charal presented their poem, song, and address.

In collaboration with like minded Institutions...

We organized two functions in collaboration with organizations functioning at our wavelength.

First was the third lecture in the series of Five Great Sons of India, organized by us in association with Takkar Bapa Vidyalaya, Gandhi Study Centre, Yuva Shakthi and Bharatamata Sangam. It was on 11th December and the Keynote address was by Bharathi Suraj, a noted Bharathi Scholar, and the founder President of Bharathi Kalai Kazhagam of 51 years's standing.

Earlier there was a Dance recital by Ms.Niranjana and Archana.

The other was on 15.12.2002.Gandhi Study Centre, YuvaSakthi and Bharatha mata Sangam combined with us to organize a lecture on " Economic Independence of India and MNCs." The speaker was Dr.Banwarilal Sharma (National Convener, Azadi Bachao Andolan & Director, Gandhian Institute of Studies and Research) Mr.M.Shantilal Jain, President, Chennai Sarvodaya Mandal, presided. There was a lively discussion following the lectures with occasional sparks flying over the differing viewpoints of the participants. In the ultimate analysis, it was more off light than heat that was generated.

Campus jotting:

An event that was omitted to be covered in the last issue was a lecture demonstration in our school on Science teaching by Ms.R.Vijaya which was well received.-

Recognition for Bharathi services:

Elsewhere in this issue, we had made a reference to Bharathi Kalai Kazhagam.. During their Bharathi day celebration and Poets Symposium, the Organization honored us by presentation of a shield. The citation mentioned our services to the poor and down trodden, and work in the Educational field, causes so dear to Bharathi. A reference was also made to Bharathi-2000 free correspondence course conducted by us on Bharathi's life and Works. The speakers on the occasion eulogized us for implementing Bharathi's ideals instead of merely paying lip service.

The Hands that help are holier than the lips that pray.

We are proud of Bharata Desh:

No more shall fear distress us.

No more shall hatred grieve us.

On our snow-clad silver mountains, we will roam;

Over the wild ocean sail out on our ships!

The whole country shall be a temple unto us.

Our Bharath desh, we shall sing and proudly dance.

—Bharathi. (Translation: Rajaji.)

THE NAMES WE KNOW THEM BY

It is a peculiarity common to all the three of our guiding lights at Sevalaya, that the names by which they are known to-day are not the names they were given by their parents. The names, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Bharathi, are all names by which they came to be known by only later in their lives. There are also interesting stories behind each one of these names.

Swami Vivekananda was named Narendranath by his parents, and was called "Naren" by all, including his guru and Master Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In January 1887, about five months after the Master's demise, twelve of the principal disciples of the Master, including Naren, got together and took Sannyasa. They went through all the rituals that are prescribed for that purpose in our scriptures. In keeping with the tradition of sannyasis, they all took new sannyasi names. Naren wanted to take the name 'Ramakrishnananda' as indication of his devotion to the Master. But seeing that another disciple Shashi was very keen on taking that name, Naren forewent his claim, and took the name Vividishananda. But he seldom used that name. In February 1891 he first used the name Vivekananda. But after about a year he changed to the name Sachchidananda. In May 1893, on the eve of his departure to United States to attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, one of his staunch disciples and patrons, Ajit Singhji, the Maharaja of Khetri, requested him to take back the name Vivekananda. Swamiji obliged his disciple, and soon came to be known as Swami Vivekananda all over the world.

It is often said that Gandhiji went to South Africa in 1893 as "Mr.Gandhi" and returned to India 21 years later as "Mahatma Gandhi". The miracle he performed in that country in 'defeating' the representatives of the mighty British Empire in a 'battle of right against wrong', could have been performed only by a mahan atma - a great soul. But who gave him that 'title' of Mahatma? Or correctly speaking, who was the first to call

him by that name? The popular belief is that Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was the first person who referred to Gandhiji as 'Mahatma'. All the available evidence indicates that Tagore first referred to Gandhiji as 'Mahatma' in February 1915, on the eve of Gandhiji's first visit to Santiniketan. But earlier to that, one of Gandhiji's closest friends, Rev.C.F.Andrews an English missionary and teacher, had written a letter to Tagore, referring to Gandhiji as "Mahatmaji". This letter was written in January 1914. This would seem to indicate that it was C.F.Andrews and not Rabindranath Tagore who was the first to refer to Gandhiji as 'Mahatma'.

Mahakavi Bharathi was named Subrahmaniam by his parents, and his 'pet name' was Subbiah. Young Subbiah's childhood, unfortunately, was not a happy one. He lost his mother when he was hardly five, left his home at Ettayapuram and stayed at Tirunelveli for his school education, and did poorly in academics. The only thing that kept him going was his love for Tamil poetry, which he started writing even as a school boy. Seeing his poor academic performance, his father withdrew him from school and got him a job under the zamindar of Ettayapuram. Subbiah was hardly 15 years of age then. One day there was a debate and discussion session organised by the zamindar in his court, and young Subbiah took part in it. He spoke so beautifully that an aged Tamil scholar who was present rose up and said that the young Subbiah was a blessed child of Goddess Saraswathi and should be called by one of Her names as "Bharathi". The title stuck and Subbiah became Subrahmanya Bharathi. Unfortunately we have no records as to the name of that aged scholar.

So there we have it - names given by an anonymous Tamil Scholar, a long-forgotten Maharaja and an almost-forgotten English missionary are the names by which we know three of our greatest sons of modern India.

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